

# **Pathways to Prosperity: Meeting the Challenge of Preparing Young Americans for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century**

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# Agenda

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- The Challenge Facing the U.S.
- A More Demanding Labor Market
- Our Failure to Meet the “College for All” Goal
- Why are we failing to prepare so many Young Adults?
- Lessons from Abroad
- The Road to an American Solution
- The Implications for Vermont

# What is the Pathways Challenge?

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The United States is increasingly failing to prepare young people to lead successful lives as adults:

- We have lost our global leadership in educational attainment and achievement
- Teen and young adults (20-24) are increasingly unable to find work
- The transition to adulthood is far longer

# A More Demanding Labor Market

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In 1973, a high school diploma was the passport to the American Dream

- 72% of the workforce of 91 million had no more than a high school degree

*Source:* Center on Education and the Workforce, Georgetown University

# Today's Reality: PSE Credential is the New Passport

Post-secondary education (PSE) is necessary to compete in the global economy in 2010 and beyond:

- Between 1973 and 2007, we added 63 million jobs
- Jobs held by those with no more than a High School education fell by 2 million over this period
- Workers with a HS education or less now make up just 41% of workforce, as compared to 72% in 1971

*Source:* Center on Education and the Workforce

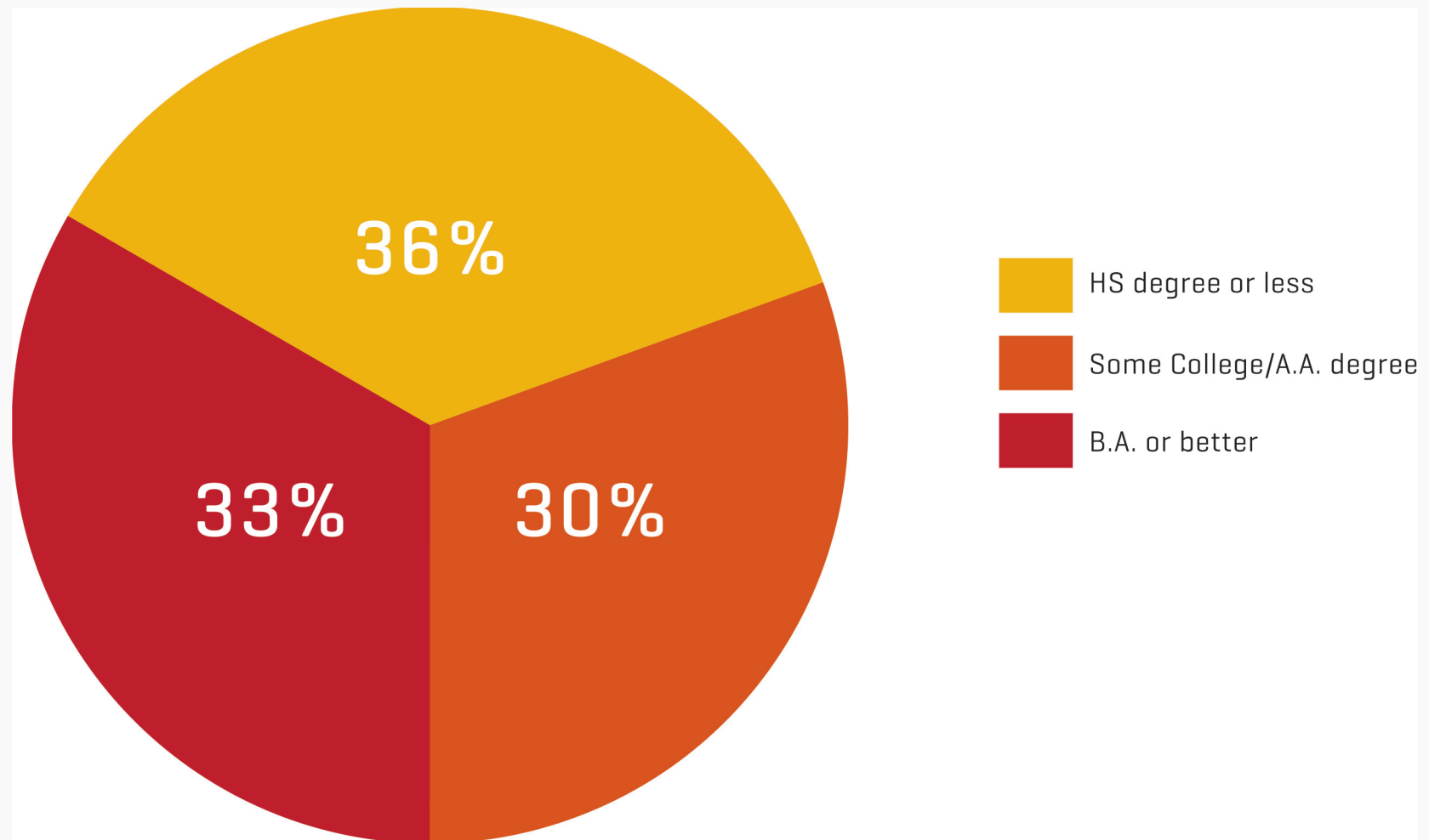
## **PSE Will Be Even More Important Tomorrow**

Economic forecasters widely agree that these trends will continue

For example, the Georgetown Center on Education and the Workforce forecasts:

- 63% of all jobs will require at least some college in 2018, up from 59% now
- The U.S. will need to produce 22 million more PSE degrees by 2018, but we are likely to fall short

College for All does not mean everyone needs a B.A. Even in this decade most jobs do not require a B.A.



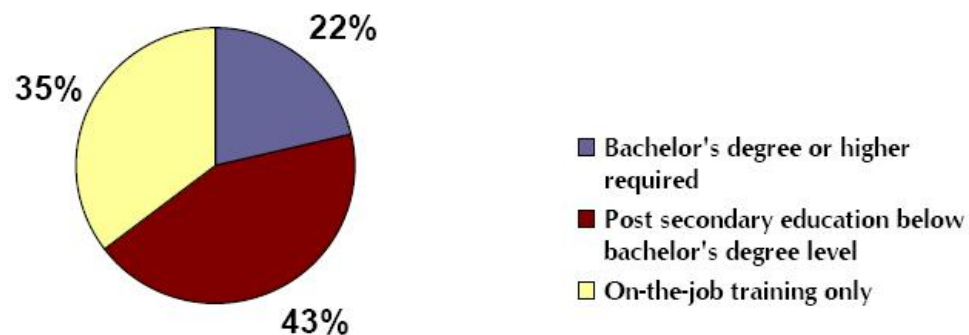
Source: March CPS data, various years; Center on Education and the Workforce forecast of educational demand to 2018.

# Many Healthcare Jobs Require Less Than a B.A.

In the fast-growing healthcare sector, over 78% of jobs require less than a B.A.

Training Requirements for Healthcare Occupations:  
Percent of Trained Workers Required by Training Level for  
Projected National Workforce Increase 2004 – 2014

Healthcare Occupation Training Requirement	Percent	Number
First professional degree	5.5	165,000
Doctoral degree	0.3	9,000
Master's degree	5.7	170,000
Bachelor's or higher degree, plus work experience	2.6	79,000
Bachelor's degree	7.4	222,000
Associate's degree	27.4	823,000
Postsecondary vocational training	15.6	468,000
High school + moderate-term, on-the-job training	10.8	325,000
High school + short-term, on-the-job training	24.6	737,000



Source: Health Careers Futures/Jewish Healthcare Foundation, *Health Careers Pathways Study* (2008)



# What is the right goal for the U.S.?

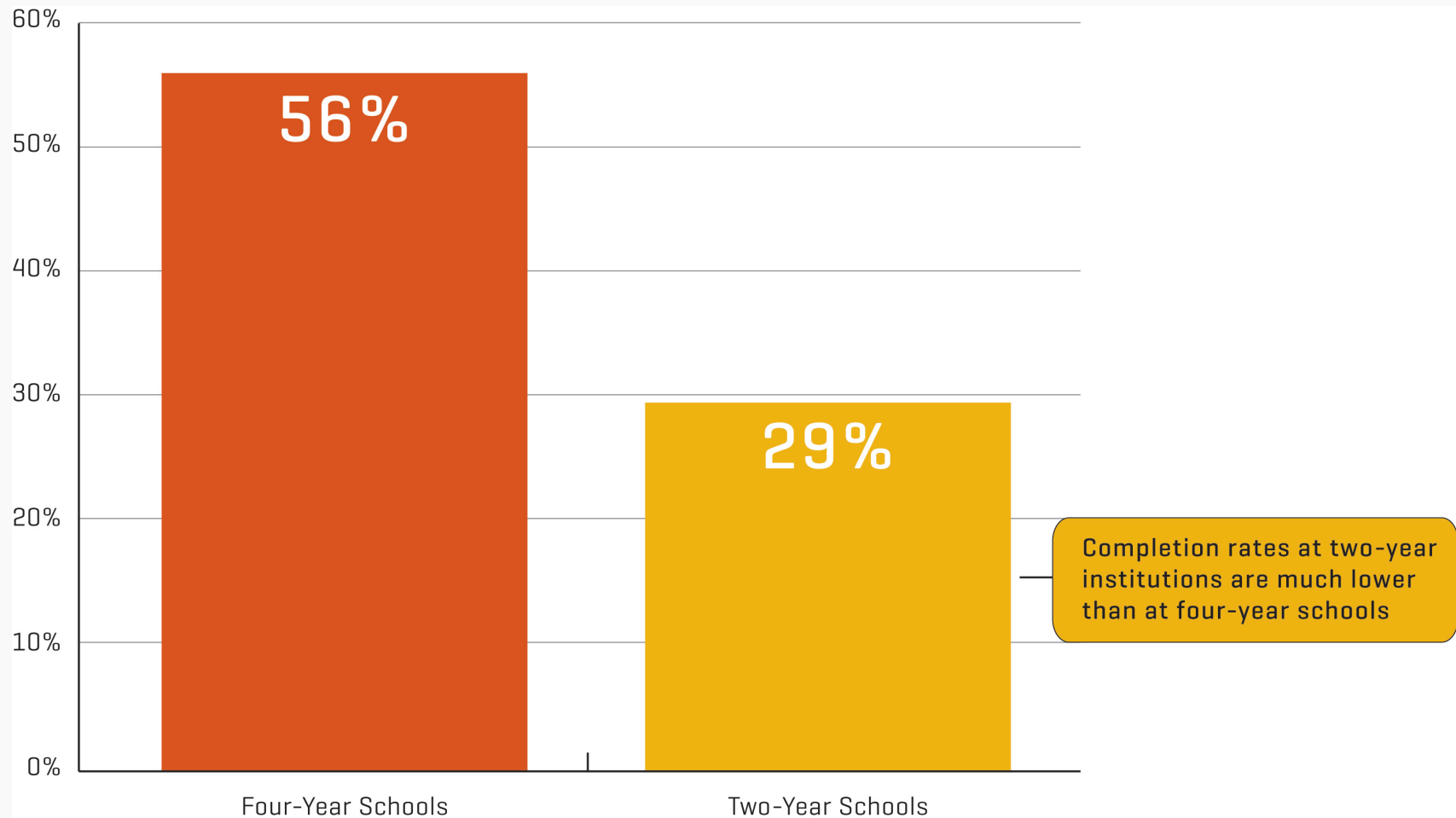
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“College for All” needs to be broadened to mean a meaningful “post-high school credential” for all

A meaningful credential can be earned in many ways:

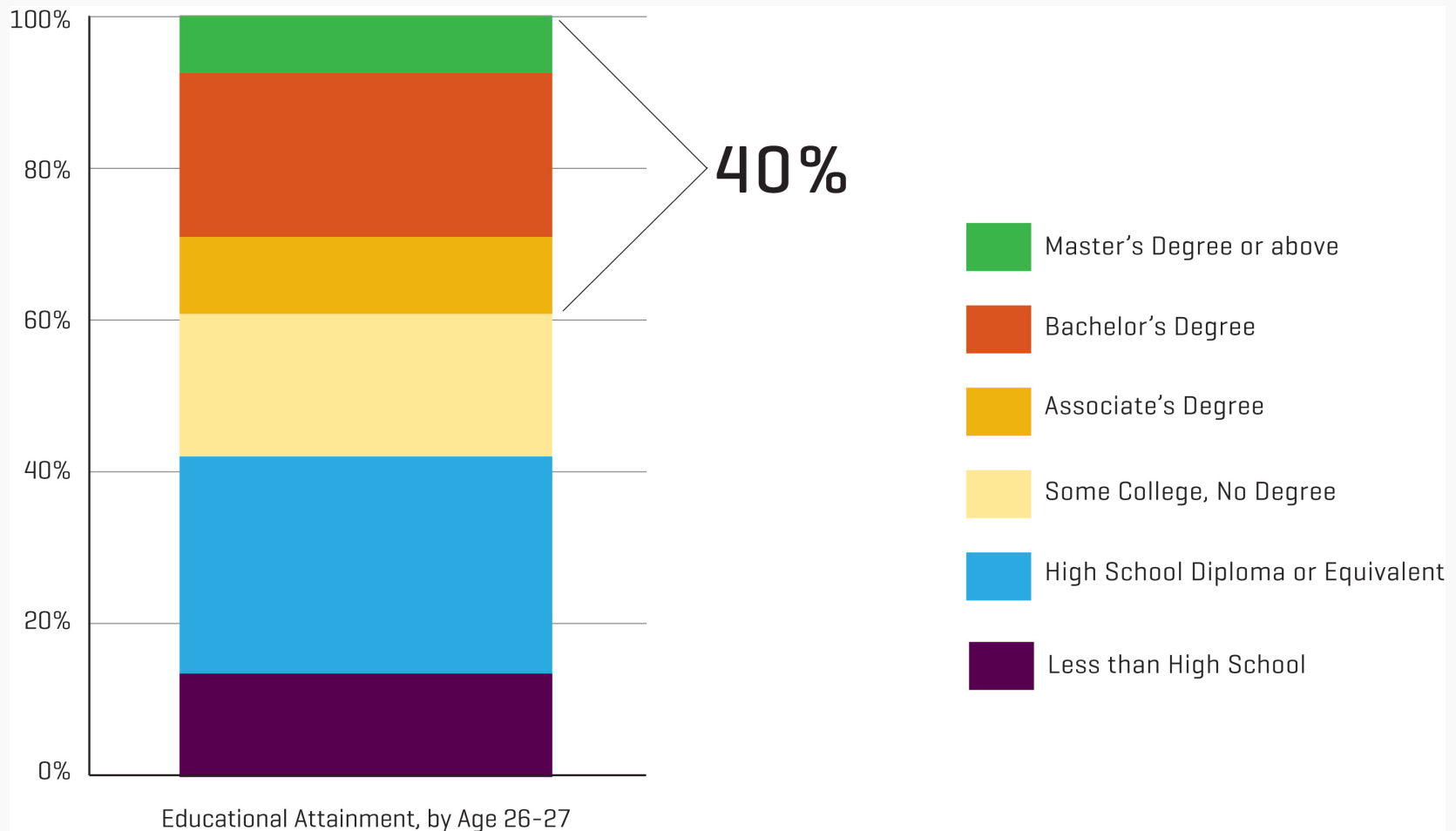
- Community colleges/ Technical Colleges
- Apprenticeships
- The military/community service
- Four year college

## U.S. “on time” college completion rates are alarmingly low



Note: Two-year schools have a three year graduation window. Four-year schools have a six-year window  
Source: Higher Ed info-NCES/IPEDS Graduation Survey.

The current U.S. reality: only 40% of 27-year olds have earned an A.A. degree or higher



Note: Represents data collected in surveys between 2006-2008; GED is approximation based on data from GED Testing Program.  
Source: Current Population Survey Annual Social and Economic Supplement.

# Are our youth Career Ready?

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U.S. Employers increasingly complain that young adults lack “21st Century Skills”:

- “Are They Ready To Work?” Report
- Partnership for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills
- Tony Wagner’s “Seven Survival Skills”

# The Crisis in Youth Employment

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## Teen employment:

- Has Plunged to lowest levels since the Great Depression
- Low-income and minority teens have been hit hardest

## Young Adult (20 to 24) employment:

- Have been hit far harder than older adults

# Why Are We Failing To Prepare So Many Youth?

- Our focus has been too narrow
- The transition to adulthood has changed radically, but our system has not evolved
- We need a broader, more holistic system of Pathways to Prosperity

# What Young People Need to Succeed

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**Three Lenses For Answering this Question:**

- **College Readiness**
- **Healthy Youth Development**
- **Workforce Readiness**

# Lessons from Abroad

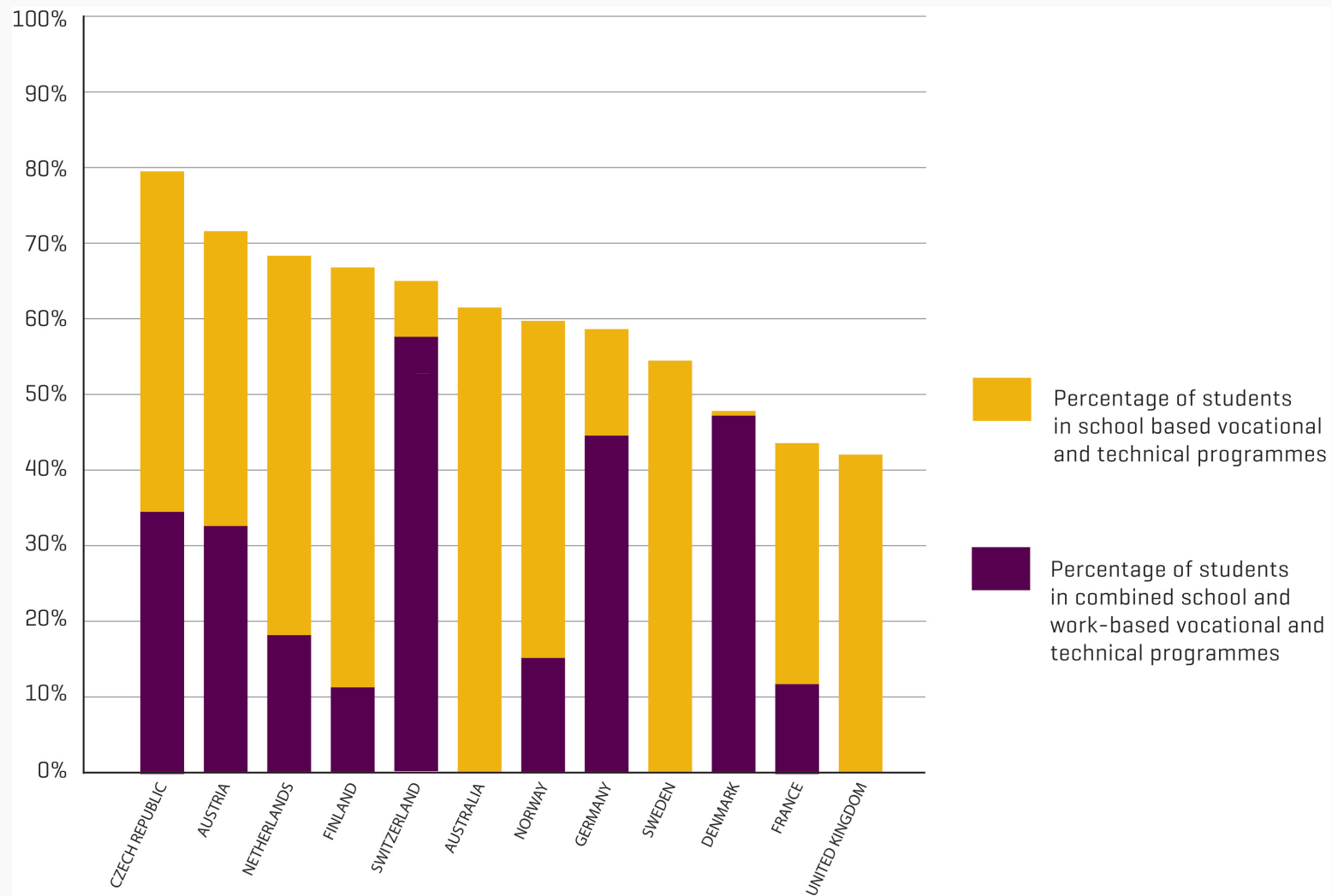


# Why Are Other Countries Surpassing the U.S.?

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- The key role of Vocational Education
- The OECD's "Learning for Jobs Report:  
Reviewed VET (Vocational Education Training in  
17 Countries

## In many European countries over half of upper secondary students are in vocational education and training



Source: OECD (2008), Education at a Glance 2008, OECD indicators, Table C1.1, OECD, Paris.

# Variations in VET By Country

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## The Dual-Apprenticeship Model:

- Germany
- Switzerland
- Denmark
- Austria

## School-based model:

- Australia
- Sweden

# The Case for Vocational Education Training

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## Pedagogical

- Best way for many young people to learn
- Apprenticeships support developmental needs of young people

## Higher attainment

- Many countries with best VET systems surpass the U.S.

## Finding work

- Facilitates transition to labor market

# Key Principles of Effective VET

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- Extensive Employer Involvement
- Integration of work and academic learning
- Opens pathways to multiple options
- Intensive career counseling
- High-quality teachers

# The Road to an American Solution

# Three Core Elements of the Pathways System

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1. Multiple Pathways
2. An Expanded Role for Employers
3. A new Social Compact with Young People

# Multiple Pathways

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## Key Elements:

- Elevate career education to world-class levels
- Provide high-quality career counseling
- Greatly expand and improve opportunities for work-based learning



# Barriers We Must Overcome

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- Cultural Resistance
- Taking high-quality programs and reforms to scale

# Expanded Role for Employers

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**Goal: Businesses need to become full partners in the Pathways system.**

**Key roles for business/employers:**

- **Career guidance**
- **Designing/developing Programs of Study**
- **Providing Opportunities for Work-based learning and Work**

# Excellent Examples of Employer Engagement

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- US First Robotics Competition
- Wisconsin Youth Apprenticeship
- National Academy Foundation
- Year Up

# Implications for Vermont

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- What is the Pathways Challenge here?  
Who is being left behind?
- What is the mismatch between education and emerging employment opportunities?
- How does this vary by region?
- Creating a Pathways movement in Vermont